

'This is my Blood of the New Testament'. The Institution of the Lord's Supper in Bach's Matthew Passion: An Exemplar for Hearing the Passion

Abstract

The context in which Bach composed most of his choral works includes a parish liturgical practice which was regularized and far-reaching. An examination of Bach's setting of the Words of Institution in BWV 244 suggests that there is a symbiotic relationship between the Passion of Christ and actual participation in the Lord's Supper.

That relationship finds unique contemporary support in a volume of sermons preached and published by one of Bach's favorite authors, August Pfeiffer. In his *Der wohlbewährte Evangelische Aug=Apfel*, a copy of which Bach had in his library, Pfeiffer proposes to assist contemporary communicants chiefly by urging an active remembrance of Christ's passion. In this way the purpose of the Lord's Supper scene in BWV 244 is to provoke deeper involvement in a ritual practice already occurring, and it therefore serves as an exemplar for all of one's engagement with the *Matthäus-Passion*.

Introduction

In his book *Bach Among the Theologians*, Jaroslav Pelikan provides useful assistance for anyone interested in exploring the connections between the music of Bach and current eighteenth-century theology. He advises

an examination both of the context in which Bach's works originated as well as their content.¹ Putting such advice to work leads one to a new appreciation for Bach's setting of the Words of institution in the Lord's Supper sequence of his *Matthäus-Passion* BWV 244. Like no other moment in that passion the Lord's Supper scene begs recognition of current liturgical practice, thus setting up a unique symbiotic relationship between Jesus' passion and the celebration of the Lord's Supper among those believers in eighteenth-century Leipzig. As such, the scene further advances itself as exemplar for understanding the purpose of the entire musical work.

I. The words of Institution at St. Thomas in Leipzig

For the average worshipper at St. Thomas liturgical piety strongly embraced if not centered in Lord's Supper theology. The normal weekly schedule, according to Günther Stiller,² provided that the chief Sunday service be sacramental and that a midweek celebration be available for those who desired it. Attendees experienced these services either as full participants or as sacramental observers who then could note anywhere from 200-400 people receiving the elements at a typical service.³ Liturgies for these services derived from early Reformation Saxon models, themselves patterned after the *Formula missae* and *Deutsche Messe* of Martin Luther.⁴ As a whole they provided for the singing of the old antiphonal Latin Preface versicles on all Festivals (at least fifteen times a year), and for the *singing* of the Words of Institution at every service except on Palm Sunday and the three Sundays before.⁵ Depending upon the level of purposeful or inadvertent improvisation pastors sang the Words of Institution or *verba* according

to one of three possible tones.⁶ Liturgical variations made possible by the Leipzig 1712 *Agenda*,⁷ according to Stiller, fell into four patterns regularly used at St. Thomas:

1. Festivals: Latin Preface, Latin Sanctus, German Lord's Prayer and the *verba* (sung by the pastor);
2. Ordinary Sundays: German Lord's Prayer and the *verba* (both sung by the pastor);
3. Sundays during Lent, beginning with Oculi, the third: Luther's Paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, his Exhortation (both from the *Deutsche Messe*), and German *verba* (spoken by the pastor);⁸
4. Maundy Thursday: Latin Preface and Sanctus, Luther's Paraphrase and Exhortation, German Lord's Prayer and the *verba* (both sung by the pastor).⁹

Immediately following the *verba* in the first option above the people were accustomed to singing the *Agnus Dei* in Latin. In the second option above they were to sing 'Jesus Christus unser Heiland'¹⁰ or 'Gott, sei gelobet'.¹¹ 'If there were many communicants',¹² the German *Agnus Dei* was to be sung (text and music provided in the 1712 *Agenda*¹³) which is the chorale assigned to the *ripieno* sopranos in the first movement of the *Matthäus-Passion*. According to Stiller and important to this study, among the many other hymns regularly used during Holy Communion was a metrical version of Psalm 23, 'Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt'.¹⁴ The shepherd image, it will be discovered, was a favorite meeting ground for themes from the passion history and the Lord's Supper.

Ceremonial specifications called the worshippers to give special attention to the nature of these services of Holy Communion. The regular use of chasubles, wax candles, kneeling at the 'consecration', sacring bells, and houseling cloths,¹⁵ represent a practice

which, albeit conservative for the time, nevertheless called for high celebrative response.

Participants entered these liturgical events with no little catechetical preparation. If Hutter's *Compendium* is a measure of the kind of theological expertise required of an educated communicant, such a worshipper was expected to know well the various confessional nuances of sacramental theology proposed by the reformers and Rome.¹⁶ To be sure, most of this theological know-how had to do with the controversies revolving around real presence. Yet, even in their fussing over controversies, the people kept returning to the *verba* for if one was to know anything at all about the Lord's Supper, the *verba* were the source and summary of every discussion – as Luther made clear in the *Small Catechism*.¹⁷ For the *verba* contained the promise, and the promise was one of 'forgiveness of sins, life and salvation'.¹⁸ Therefore the *verba* were a 'thousand times more important than the elements of the sacrament'.¹⁹

This high regard for the *verba* was a mark of orthodox Lutheranism. Leonard Fendt wrote years ago that the distinguishing feature of evangelical worship was the Word of God, like a 'soul' breathed into traditional form.²⁰ Yet, when pressed, orthodox Lutherans were never sure what God was doing in those words: were they prayer, blessing, proclamation, consecration, or commentary?²¹ Perhaps in retrospect one could say all of that in varying degrees. For ordinary forms of the liturgy at St. Thomas pastors were directed to sing the *verba* according to the formulary tone of the Lord's Prayer (with roots in the *Formula missae*). For the festival services the Gospel tone was employed (with roots in the *Deutsche Messe*). These patterns encouraged parishioners to receive the *verba* as prayer or proclamation, or both. Catecheses would nudge them to-

wards proclamation, and that was strengthened by the occasional use of Luther's 'Exhortation'. In that piece Luther urged worshippers, to

discern the Testament of Christ in true faith and, above all, take to heart the *words wherein Christ imparts* [emphasis mine] to his body and his blood for the remission of our sins.²²

Prior to this 'Exhortation' in the 'Paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer' of the *Deutsche Messe*, the people were invited to 'lift up your hearts',²³ perhaps a deliberate reference to the *Sursum corda* of the Preface versicles, but surely a sign that the Lord's Supper was understood to be the moment for turning one's heart to the words of promise in the *verba*.

Conscious of the need to persist in reminding worshippers what was given and received in the Lord's Supper, keepers of the liturgy at St. Thomas arranged to have sermons on that sacrament each Maundy Thursday, the one day of the year when the Epistle (1 Cor. 11) rather than the Gospel was used as sermon text. Together with Bach's tenure cantata librettists referenced the Lord's Supper in more than forty-five individual works.²⁴

A review of this kind accents the observation that St. Thomas took seriously its heritage as a church of Word *and* Sacrament.²⁵ It also makes clear how the liturgy of the Lord's Supper permeated a typical parishioner's worship life, begging attention to the wide-ranging dynamics it could afford. Such a complex of theological idea, ritual habit, pastoral memory, and religious feeling, as is true for any kind of regularized cultic practice, could be tapped at any one of many places to provide access to the entire complex.

One can argue, therefore, that a sung recital of the *verba*²⁶ would be an access point

to this vast complex of sacramental piety. In the *Matthäus-Passion*, Picander (i.e. Christian Friedrich Henrici) reached into the reservoir by providing free text following the *verba*. Bach, acknowledging that lead, created obvious musical linkage to support the text of Picander. Provoked by these connections, we turn, then, to the *Matthäus-Passion* in order to explore the composer's setting of the Words of Institution and their relationship to surrounding material.

II. The *verba* in the St. Matthew Passion

In the 1734 edition of the libretto for the *Matthäus-Passion*, Picander made it clear that the recitative and aria immediately following the biblical text of the *verba* were to be understood as interpretive since he subtitled the entire section 'Als Jesus das Abendmahl gehalten'.²⁷ At a minimum, therefore, we should consider as a musical unit all the material beginning with measure 16 of NBA 11 and concluding with the aria, NBA 13. Given that, some observations may be made:

1. Bach has followed conventional practice by setting the words of Jesus in NBA 11, mm. 16ff, in arioso form, *accompagnato*.²⁸

Within that precedent, however, he seems to have taken great care to provide captivating melody and counterpoint, hardly surpassed by any other set of Jesus' words within the total work.

2. Following the lead of Matthew's Gospel the saying about the bread is quite short. Musically, its beginning and ending are shaped by the figures *anabasis* and *katabasis* (see Example 1, A1 and A2) to enable an emphasis on the word 'ist'.²⁹ The same two figures appear again for the saying about the wine in mm. 24f., and occur *passim* in the string parts (v. II, m. 28; v. II and va, m. 34).

Example 1.

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Evangelista

Jesus

Und er nahm den Kelch und dan - ke - te, gab

Neh - met, es - set, das ist mein Leib.

B.c.

ih - nen den und sprach:

Trin - ket al - le dar - aus; das ist mein Blut des

neu - en Te - sta - ments, wel - ches ver - gos - sen wird für vie - le zur Ver - ge - bung

Musical score for 'The Institution of the Lord's Supper'. The score is in 4/4 time and includes parts for Violino I, Violino II, Viola, Evangelista (Soprano), and B.c. (Bassoon). The lyrics are in German. The score is divided into systems, with measures 19-22, 23-26, and 27-30 shown. The Evangelista part includes the lyrics: 'Und er nahm den Kelch und dan - ke - te, gab' and 'Neh - met, es - set, das ist mein Leib.' The B.c. part includes the lyrics: 'ih - nen den und sprach: Trin - ket al - le dar - aus; das ist mein Blut des' and 'neu - en Te - sta - ments, wel - ches ver - gos - sen wird für vie - le zur Ver - ge - bung'. The score includes various musical markings such as dynamics (p, f), articulation (accents), and performance instructions (A1, A2, B, C).

30

tr **B** **C**

de Sün - den. Ich sa - ge euch: Ich wer - de von nun an nicht

7 5 8 7 4 2 8 6 9 7 3 6 6 5 6

C **D**

33

A1 **A1**

mehr von die - sem Ge - wächs des Wein - stocks trin - ken bis an den

4+ 2 5 2 6 6 5 7 7 5 6 6 4+ 7 2

36

tr **A1** **A1** **A1**

Tag, da ichs neu - trin - ken wer - de mit euch in mei - nes Va - ters Reich.

7 6 6 7 6 6 5 5 9 8 6 6 6 4 5

Fragment A1 is used extensively *seriatim* in the voice part, mm. 33-38.

3. The melisma in m. 24 on the word 'alle' (all), it has been suggested,³⁰ prompts three variations: Example 1, B, C, and D. Variation D might also be derived from the eighth notes above 'viele' (many) in m. 29. If so, the characteristic downward movement of the continuo in mm. 35ff. might suggest the benefits of these gifts which extend from one generation to another, while the simultaneous upward movement in the voice part would then signify Jesus' vow to remove himself from further physical partici-

pation until everyone is reunited above. The *anabasis/katabasis* contrast throughout these measures could actually represent a variety of sacramental energies: taking the cup/putting it down; reaching upward for nourishment/being fed: lifting up the heart/having it filled (cf. *schenken* [offer up] and *senken* [settle into] in the subsequent aria).

4. Bach uses fragment B (Example 1) at four locations: mm. 25, 27 (slightly altered), 28 and 30. Each occurrence appears to function as a punctuation of some sort, i.e., after 'Trinket alle' (all of you, drink), 'neuen Testaments' (New Testament), 'vergossen wird'

Example 2.

Oboe d'amore I

Oboe d'amore II

Soprano

Continuo Organ

(-freit) Sein Fleisch und Blut, o

Kost - bar - keit ver - macht er mir in mei - ne Hän - de.

6

3

3

6

7^b 5 6

4⁺ 2

6 5^b

6 6

6 4

5[#]

(is shed), and 'Vergebung der Sünden' (forgiveness of sins). Each phrase receiving such punctuation represents a major Lutheran emphasis in Lord's Supper theology. The latter two focus upon redemption through the shedding of Christ's blood.

5. The recitative (NBA 12) deals with the impending separation of Christ from the disciples. Oboes d'amore, instruments of love,³¹ set the tone with waves of heartfelt love moved to tears by the absence of Jesus. Yet, heart-sick longing is not the point. Any feelings of abandonment are transcended by Christ's Testament which presently brings great joy. The Testament bestows gifts which are 'Kostbarkeit' (items of great value), signalled by the sudden move in the oboes from parallel thirds to sixths (Example 2). Such gifts are real for they arrive in the hand (*katabasis* at m. 8). Suddenly quoting John 13:1, Picander calls up one final Lutheran strain by appealing to Jesus' presence as a sign of his love which will go all the way to the 'end'. Ultimately, one must understand that end to be his 'Vaters Reich' (the Father's Kingdom).³²

Now what kind of tears are the oboes inviting here? We gain insight from a sermon on tears by Johann Jacob Rambach, published in his 1731 *Betrachtung der Thränen und Seufzer Jesu Christi*, a copy of which Bach had in his library:

Let the world weep because of impatience, stubbornness, arrogance, hypocrisy, or physical tenderness. In your eyes there ought to be no tears save those which come from love.³³

The tears, then, fall not from despairing sadness but from love and joy precisely because of the Testament, Christ's real presence, and hope for the future.

6. Because the liturgical form of the *verba* is a conflation of the biblical accounts, com-

posers would be dissuaded from using the customary agenda melodies for the *verba* in their settings of the passion histories. So like others who wrote in the oratorio-passion style Bach made no overt attempt at quoting the pastor's chant.³⁴ Unlike other composers, Bach never took up the *verba* as text for a motet, a genre in which it was possible to adopt the chant melody as *cantus firmus*, e.g. Johann Ahle's double-chorus setting.³⁵ Apart from such conventions one is tempted to read the formulary tones *into* the arioso at NBA 11. Example 3 provides parts of the three tones which were included with minor variations in the 1712 *Agenda*.³⁶ Tone I at A and Tone II at B share some common characteristics, both related, possibly, to fragment B of the arioso. Further, Tone II at C displays the *anabasis/katabasis* curvature (transposed, of course), and the indicated part of Tone III looks much like the melisma above the word 'alle', NBA 11, m. 24. Whether or not Bach had any of these patterns in mind is after all not demonstrable, but the similarities tease the imagination.

7. Again in NBA 11, fragments B and C (Example 1) clearly function in part as musical bridges between this arioso and the aria at NBA 13 two movements later (see Example 4, mm. 18f.). In that aria Bach specified the soloist to be a soprano indicating, presumably, an ideal believer. Such a one's ideal response is to consist in a heart lifted up expectedly in hunger, only to be satisfied then beyond all expectation.

Key relationships within this three-movement Lord's Supper scene have elicited significant analyses offered at first by Friedrich Smend,³⁷ then by Renate Steiger,³⁸ and most recently by Eric Chafe.³⁹ Overall it can be said that NBA 11, m. 19, begins in F-major, moves to C-major at m. 24, and then at mm. 32-33 progresses to G-major which is also

Example 3.

Tone I, beginning:

Un - ser Herr Je - sus Christ in der Nacht, da er ver - ra - ten ward,
nahm er das Brot, dankt und brachs und gabs seinen Jün - gern und sprach:
Nehmt hin und es - set; das ist mein Leib, der für euch ge - ge - ben wird. A

Tone II, beginning:

Un - ser Herr Je - sus Christ in der Nacht, da er ver - C
ra - ten ward, nahm er das Brot, dankt und brachs, gabs seinen
Jün - gern und sprach: Nehmt hin und es - set; das ist mein Leib,
der für euch ge - ge - ben wird. Solchs tut zu mei - nem Ge - dächt - nis. B

Tone III, termination:

Solchs tut, so oft ihrs trinkt, zu mei - nem Ge - dächt - nis.

Example 4.

The musical score for Example 4 consists of four staves. The top staff is for Oboe I d'amore, the second for Oboe II d'amore, the third for Soprano, and the bottom for B.c. (Bassoon). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The Soprano part has the lyrics "mein Her - ze - schen - ken," with a fermata over "ze" and "schen". Above the Soprano staff, two brackets labeled "B" and "C" are placed over the notes corresponding to "ze" and "schen" respectively. The B.c. staff has fingering numbers: 6, 7, 6, 5, 4, 2, 5, 3, 6.

the key for the aria at NBA 13. The intervening recitative wants to be heard at first as e-minor but concludes rather in C-major. It is unnecessary to rehearse all the conclusions which have been drawn from these measures. For present purposes it is important to note both the excursion to G-major in which key Jesus promises not to eat again until the end-time, and the fact that the aria at NBA 13 occurs in the same key. G-major is also the key for the *ripieno* chorale sung in the middle of the e-minor double-chorus dialog of the first movement. Martin Petzoldt has pointed out that those *ripieno* sopranos likely represent the voices of heavenly Jerusalem.⁴⁰ The key of G-major then is advanced as 'home' for 'Vaters Reich', for the voices of heavenly Jerusalem, and for the presence of Christ in the sacrament.

But there are larger key issues here, as well. Smend called attention to the fact that the G-major section begins already at NBA 9a, indicating definite connections among the passover preparation, Lord's Supper, and the end-time.⁴¹ Intervening flat-keys from NBA 9 through 11a accommodate the betrayal of Judas, but the eschatological assertion in the Lord's Supper material restores the momentum of G-major. A sudden

detour into E-minor at NBA 12 is temporary, for a cadence in C-major, serving as the sub-dominant of G-major, indicates that the recitative is related to the G-major material.

As a response to this initiative from Smend, it might be possible to embrace additional movements as part of the Lord's Supper scene. For instance, one could argue that NBA 14 also belongs to the Lord's Supper section. While introduced in the key of E-minor, this movement actually moves quite dramatically into E-major at which time Jesus is given to predict his resurrection and his resurrected presence as the power which gathers the new community. E-major is also the key for the subsequent chorale, though after the chorale things move again quite dramatically, this time into C-minor.

Now how can E-major be brought into the surrounding keyscheme? Eric Chafe's arguments for tonal allegory in the *Matthäus-Passion* are convincing in their large dimensions. In his analysis, E-minor is the key of the crucifixion drama, E-major by contrast a key which transcends the physical events of the passion. E-major is meant to signal the resolution of the passion drama – which the listener, of course, already knows to be the resurrected life.⁴² The sudden key change af-

ter 'Erkenne mich', NBA 15, suggests to Chafe that this chorale and not the aria at NBA 13 should be considered the conclusion to the Lord's Supper scene.⁴³ Because the chorale also seems to be an answer to 'when they had sung a hymn', Jaroslav Pelikan supports this broadening of the Lord's Supper scene.

When one takes sections NBA 9-15 to be an interrelated unit centered in the Lord's Supper, some additional musical/theological observations emerge: 1. The assertion that Jesus loves his own to the 'end' finds its penultimate fulfilment in his 'going before them into Galilee'; the Lord's Supper in turn, provides the 'Himmelslust' (desire for heaven – the last line of 'Erkenne mich') which leads each beloved believer to the ultimate 'end': the 'Vaters Reich'. 2. While the immediate connection between the chorale 'Erkenne mich' and its preceding recitative likely centers in the 'Hirte' (shepherd) – Bach himself possibly and mistakenly substituting that very word for the original 'Hüter' (protector) in Paul Gerhardt's text⁴⁵ – Smend plausibly suggests that the rest of that stanza from Gerhardt's hymn provides a more profound connection. Thus, one should note that the shepherd is acknowledged as the 'Quell aller Güter' (source of all goodness), the one who restores with 'Milch und süßer Kost' (milk and sweet victuals – honey?). It is difficult to resist turning this exodus menu into a poetic reference to the sacramental food of the final promised land.⁴⁶ 3. In NBA 9 the passion history designates Judas as the first to depart the side of Jesus, but eventually all the disciples will leave, as Jesus predicted in the Mount of Olives discourse. He, on the other hand, remains faithful both in the Lord's Supper and, later, in Galilee. Scattering and gathering provide a dynamic which can be understood to undergird this entire section. The Good Shepherd is the only one able to

gather because of the blood of the covenant offered in the Lord's Supper. *Erkenne mich* is as much, if not more, a prayer placed into the mouth of a Leipzig *communicant* than it is a general pious wish of a believer. The chorale likewise invites recognition of one's inability to keep the faith apart from the Shepherd.⁴⁷

There are compelling reasons, it seems to me, for regarding the Lord's Supper segment as embracing everything from NBA 9 through 15. If so, then it becomes even more obvious that the section is meant to evoke directly the listener's own sacramental piety. It is as if the passion history exists to elicit Lord's Supper practice just as sacramental participation requires an evocation of the passion history. The final section of this paper explores how this symbiotic relationship was understood by one of Bach's favorite authors.

III. Christ's Passion and the Lord's Supper according to August Pfeiffer

August Pfeiffer (1640–1698) was both scholar and ecclesiastical bureaucrat. At the age of twenty-five he was appointed professor of oriental studies at the University of Wittenberg. Famous as a linguist Pfeiffer also himself authored more than fifty writings, many of them polemical pieces. From 1681–1689 he was archdeacon at St. Thomas in Leipzig while at the same time professor of theology at the university. He concluded his career as an ecclesiastical superintendent in Lübeck.

Apart from Luther, Pfeiffer apparently was Bach's favorite author.⁴⁸ Eight titles by Pfeiffer are included in the inventory of Bach's library.⁴⁹ These volumes comprise commentaries, sermons, devotional material, and polemical treatises. One volume was published in Leipzig the same year as

Bach's birth, and consists of a collection of sermons on the *Augsburg Confession*. It bears this title:

Der wolbewährte/ evangelische Augapfel/ Oder/ Schriftmässige Erklärung aller Articul/ Der/ Augspurgischen/ CONFESSIO./ Als des/ Evangelischen Glaubens-Bekänntnißes/ Darinnen/ So wohl die Evangelische Wahrheit/ als der Papisten und ande-/ rer Falschgläubigen Irrthümer und Mißbräuche durch eigene hierüber zu S. Thomas in Leipzig gehaltene/ SERMONES/ Gründlich und deutlich vorgestellt werden (Leipzig, Klosz 1685)

The well-tested evangelical Apple of the Eye, or an Explantation, tempered by the Scriptures, of all the articles of the Augsburg Confession, including as well the evangelical confessional faith and evangelical truth; also the papistic and other false-believing errors and practices are fundamentally and clearly presented, all through sermons, at St. Thomas in Leipzig.

The format of this rather large volume (1408 pages) derives from the structure of the *Augsburg Confession* itself. Each article is reproduced, followed by the Roman Catholic confutation, the appropriate article from the *Apology*, and concluded finally by a sermon or sermons, each with its own scriptural text. For Article x on the Lord's Supper this format requires sixty-nine pages including four sermons.

The first sermon based on 1 Cor. 10:16 presents a lengthy defense of the Lutheran position on real presence. Three remaining sermons form a unit the purpose of which, Pfeiffer explains, is

to engage in a pastoral meditation, and to place before your Christian love festal regulations concerning the hospitality of Christ; [these regulations] are to be received as Christian table behaviour for worthy communicants – or twelve regulations for guests, four

before, four during, and four after participation in the holy supper.⁵⁰

Worthy personal participation in the Lord's Supper had been a concern of Luther already in the *Small Catechism*.⁵¹ There he recommended that a lively and trusting faith is the best preparation. He was calling for an invested response which employs heart, mind, and soul. That Pfeiffer advances the subject of worthiness in three out of four sermons indicates just how important an issue this was for then practising Lutheran communicants.

In his second sermon, then, he lays down four rules for those who are preparing for worthy reception of the sacrament:

- i. Let one observe the time, come often and diligently.
- ii. Let one excite the appetite, be longing for grace.
- iii. Let one examine you carefully, make confession contritely.
- iv. Let one listen and pray devotedly, pray devotionally.⁵²

In the body of this second sermon he expands section ii by asking how one can develop an appetite for the Lord's Supper should there be a mild case of spiritual anorexia. His prescription is threefold:

1. By testing your public actions.
2. By commemoration of the Lord's Supper.
3. By meditating on the Lord's Supper.⁵³

Here is what Pfeiffer says about the second of these:

Consider thereby the bitter sufferings and death of Jesus Christ/ as often as you eat of this bread and drink from this cup/ you should proclaim the Lord's death / until he comes/ which for you is a remembrance to be held with gratitude/ until the Lord comes again on that day. So then, think about the last quaking and fearful night/ when your Je-

sus/ as a pitiful, lowly worm/ had to turn to his sufferings on earth/ be seized/ bound/ de- rided/ despised/ struck/ scourged/ crowned with thorns/ dammed to death/ and crucified. Indeed he wants to say thereby/ You have burdened me with your sins/ you have wear- ried me with your iniquities! I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake/ and remember your sins never again. Is. 43:24.⁵⁴

In the very next section Pfeiffer advises that hunger can be developed by meditating on the good gifts of the Lord's Supper:

If your Saviour would have had in his heart something higher or more loving, out of love he would have given your soul the best. What more could he have lovingly given you/ than his most holy body and blood/ which he has received in his communion with the God- head? How could he have given you a more faithful bond or love/ or a higher pledge of grace? Shoudn't such consideration awaken in us a spiritual appetite so that we come to say: Ah, I have a heartfelt desire, my Jesus, to celebrate the supper with you!⁵⁵

In the third sermon based on 1 Cor. 11:26-28 Pfeiffer proposes four guidelines by which one might achieve worthy participation during the Lord's Supper:

- i. Let one approach with faith, let faith not waiver.
- ii. Let one separate himself from strange things, shun earthly thoughts.
- iii. Let one have a thought for things present, have holy thoughts.
- iv. Let one preserve decorum, restrain yourself.⁵⁶

In the final sermon, also based on 1 Cor. 11:26-28, Pfeiffer lays out four guides de- signed to prolong a participant's worthiness beyond the liturgical event.

- i. Let one celebrate God, let your heart be thankful.

- ii. Let one radiate the eagerness of one's undertakings, rejoice constantly over what happens to you.
- iii. Let one avoid sleep, you should resist sleep.
- iv. Let one walk with God, you should continually walk in God's ways.⁵⁷

Taking up the theme of celebration Pfeiffer specifies how the communed can extend their joyous mood:

1. By giving thanks for benefits received.
2. By announcing the Lord's death.⁵⁸

The second of these interests us as he then goes on:

Not only is the holy supper a meal of thanks- giving/ but also a meal of remembrance./ It is not enough that a guest thank the Host/ but he must make known to others the glory which he has enjoyed [...] With one's own community and with other pious Christians one should sing and speak of the motives and profits of Jesus Christ's suffering and death/ the power of which he has permitted to be ex- perience in the very valuable supper. [...] Now it is indeed good that there be a yearly remembrance of the cross-death of Jesus;/ however, the daily/ especially the solemn re- membrance by use of the holy supper, is thereby not abolished.⁵⁹

Celebration is not the only way to prolong worthiness, Pfeiffer continues, but one should work at nurturing a 'burning ardor over the things received'. With a touch that gainsays the coldness usually attributed to Lutheran orthodoxy, Pfeiffer compares the Lord's Supper to a fine 'delicate' meal from which there is always a lasting aftertaste.

They should ponder the Lord's death/ not only as long as the holy action continues/ but until the Lord comes (even if not right away) to hold tribunal with many thousand saints/ especially to demand of each one what is his or her situation/ as he [the Lord] formerly spoke: so it is my will that one remains

(steadfast) until I come./ What applies to such a one [saint]? In short: For his whole life long even till his own day of judgement he should have ruminated on the nourishment for his own soul which he has likewise enjoyed;/ [he should have] experienced from that an unheard-of aftertaste in his soul/ – that nourishment rightly transforming into Spirited life;/ also [he should know] that Jesus is with him and remains till the end.⁶⁰

With these three sermons Pfeiffer proposed to offer assistance to communicants who desired to wrap their sacramental attendance with a cloak of worthiness. It is clear that for Pfeiffer such worthiness derives from a deliberate calling to mind of Christ's passion. Such an act of remembrance, he felt, was sure to develop a hunger for the Lord's Supper both by recognizing one's own involvement in causing Christ's punishment and by discovering again the unexpected love of God in Christ's death, 'That God meets us no longer with anger but with love' (*Daß Gott uns nicht mehr mit Zorn, sondern mit Liebe begegnet*), as Elke Axmacher has written.⁶¹

Further, such an act of remembrance is the key to extending eucharistic joy, Pfeiffer urges; therefore let it sound out in word and song from one Lord's Supper to another. Let it fill the time between celebrations with proclamation, and let that continue from one generation to another. Finally, because the believer always interacts with Christ's passion from this side of the resurrection, the passion is always a tale of joy. Such a regular act of remembrance increasingly intensifies one's joy over the Lord's Supper and it affords a growing desire to reach that time when with Christ it can be tasted new in the Father's kingdom.

In her study of Heinrich Müller's passion sermons, Elke Axmacher concludes that early eighteenth-century passion preaching was meant to renew the believer's life, the

passion itself not a 'Schauspiel' (theatrical play) but a 'Spiegel' (a mirror). Christ's passion is not some alien tale describing a life from years ago, but it is 'my thing', the means by which God provides me a full history of myself, Luther would say.⁶²

Pfeiffer showed his own interest in nurturing personal interaction with the passion when he proposed his variation on the commonly-held three-fold goal for passion preaching. Sermons, he emphasized, should lead the believer to deeper appropriation of: 1) the satisfaction Christ has presented God on our behalf, 2) the merits we receive because of Christ's death, and 3) the changes of life his death generates.⁶³ The three sermons on the Lord's Supper are meant to serve the third goal and Pfeiffer boldly advances the Lord's Supper as means to that goal.

For Pfeiffer, and one might assume also for Bach, the Passion (in the sense that it is rehearsed in the believer's hearing) is a premise for the Lord's Supper just as the Lord's Supper is premise to the Passion. Passion and the Lord's Supper exist for the believer in a symbiotic relationship.

In 1519 Luther was beginning to detect the deep disparity between the Gospel and the then current sacramental practice. During that year he wrote his 'Meditation on Christ's Passion' in which he noted the mischief that issues from a separation of the Lord's Supper and the love of God in Christ's death. With some frustration, he exclaims 'the mass was not instituted for its own worthiness, but to make us worthy and to remind us of the passion of Christ'.⁶⁴

On the other hand, the Passion is a premise to the Lord's Supper. One of the more profound insights of the passion history is that the scattered sheep could not be gathered were it not for the death of the Shepherd who could then depart *in order to* provide the precious gifts for the whole flock

being gathered. In Luther's 'Treatise on the New Testament' the *verba* are lifted up as the way by which God personalizes the effects of Christ's passion: 'That little word 'testament' is a short summary of all God's wonders and grace, fulfilled in Christ'.⁶⁵ 'In these words (Christ) promises and bequethes to you forgiveness of all your sins and the life eternal'.⁶⁶ The gift of the Lord's Supper is therefore the gift of the Passion.

If, as Pfeiffer would have it, the purpose of sung passions is to engage the listener and to renew his or her own relationship to the saving work of God, then the Lord's Supper section, conceived narrowly or broadly, is exemplar for fulfilling the goal of the entire *Matthäus-Passion*. For the Lord's Supper unit intends to provoke deeper involvement in ritual practice already occurring, particularly that practice which, unlike preaching, is shaped specifically for the individual, *pro me*.⁶⁷

It remains to be said that this symbiotic relationship between the Lord's Supper in practice and the Passion of Christ strikingly corresponds to contemporary understandings of the function of *anamnesis* in eucharistic prayers. Such prayers attempt to articulate and anchor the ritual energies of the celebration. In structural terms the *anamnesis* consists of a specific section of such a prayer, and its purpose is to rehearse the story for present need.

Liturgical history is littered with divergent interpretations of *anamnesis*, but recently a remarkable ecumenical convergence on this matter has generated this common statement:

Christ himself with all he has accomplished for us and for all creation (in his incarnation, servanthood, ministry, teaching, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Spirit) is present in this *anamnesis*, granting us communion with himself.⁶⁸

Pfeiffer, Picander, Luther, Bach and the World Council of Churches make strange bedfellows! But then we might be witnessing the very gathering process which is the goal and heart of the exemplar.

Curriculum vitae

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Notes

1. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Bach Among the Theologians* (Philadelphia 1986), p. 27.
2. Günther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig*, ed. Robin Leaver (St. Louis 1984).
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-134.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 127. Frieder Schulz holds up the Saxon course of agendas as primary examples how the *Formula missae* of Luther was perpetuated through text, music, and ceremony. 'Einführung', *Coena Domini* 1, ed. Irmgard Pahl (Freiburg [Switzerland] 1983), p. 2.

5. *Agenda, / Das ist, / Kirchen-Ordnung / Wie sich die Pfarrherren und Seel- / sorger in ihren Ämtern und Diensten / verhalten sollen* (Leipzig 1712), pp. 114-137.
6. *Ibid.* pp. 131f., 133f., and 136f.; the first is from the *Deutsche Messe* of Luther, the remaining settings from the 1540 Saxon *Agenda*. See *Der Altargesang*, Vol. 1/1 of *Handbuch der deutschen evangelischen Kirchenmusik*, ed. Konrad Ameln, Christhard Mahrenholz, et al. (Göttingen 1942), pp. 315, 321, and 317.
7. *Agenda* 1712, pp. 79, 131-138.
8. The notes of the St. Thomas sexton Johann Christoph Rost are not clear to this writer. As reproduced in Martin Petzoldt, 'Passionspredigt und Passionsmusik der Bachzeit', in: *Johann Sebastian Bach. Matthäus-Passion, BWV 244* (Kassel 1990), p. 20, the notes read for Palm Sunday: 'die Praefation orationis Dominicae wie sonst in Fasten gelesen, alßdann kommen verba coenae.' This suggests that the *verba* were spoken as well.
9. Stiller, p. 126f.
10. 'Jesus Christ, our Blessed Saviour', *Lutheran Worship*, prepared by Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (St. Louis 1982), Nos. 236-237.
11. 'O Lord, We Praise You', *Lutheran Book of Worship* prepared by Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship (Minneapolis 1978), No. 215.
12. *Agenda* 1712, p. 138.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Stiller, p. 128.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 268, 263, 106, and 138. A revealing woodcut in *Das Babst'sche Gesangbuch* (Leipzig 1545), following item XIX, demonstrates an example of a houseling cloth.
16. Leonhard Hutter's *Compendium locorum theologicorum* (Wittenberg 1693) presents thirty-six pages of carefully crafted questions and answers on the Lord's Supper, most concerned with the issue of real presence.
17. Martin Luther, 'Receiving Both Kinds in the Sacrament' 1522, *Word and Sacrament II*, ed. Abdel Ross Wentz, Vol. 36 of *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut Lehmann and Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia 1959), p. 254. Hereafter this edition will be referred to as *AE*.
18. The centrality of the *verba* for any and all discussions of Lord's Supper theology within historic Lutheranism is demonstrated by Keith Killinger in: *Hoc Facite. The Role of the Words of Institution in the Lutheran Understanding and Celebration of the Lord's Supper in the Sixteenth Century* (Th.D. diss, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago 1993).
19. Martin Luther, *Small Catechism*, vi/10, *The Book of Concord*, ed. Theodore Tappert (St. Louis 1959), p. 132. In a sermon on the Sacrament of the Altar Luther said in 1526: 'Wenn ich nu der sunde los und frey bin, so bin ich auch der Tod, teuffels und helle los un bin ein son Gottes, ein herr hymmels und der erden.' *Sermon von dem Sakrament*, in: *WA* 19, 506.
20. Leonhard Fendt, *Der Lutherische Gottesdienst des 16. Jahrhunderts* (München 1923), p. 244.
21. Rudolf Staehelin, 'Die Geschichte des Christlichen Gottesdienstes', in: *Geschichte und Lehre des Evangelischen Gottesdienstes*, Vol. 1 of *Leiturgia*, ed. Karl Ferdinand Müller and Walter Blankenburg (Kassel 1954), p. 62.
22. Martin Luther, 'The German Mass', in: *Liturgy and Hymns*, *AE* 53, p. 79f.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
24. Stiller, p. 84.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
26. It needs to be acknowledged that the

- verba* used in services of Holy Communion are a compilation of accounts from the Gospels and 1 Corinthians. However, the account of the Words of Institution in Matthew concurs in so many respects with the *verba* (liturgically speaking), that connections proposed in this paper should not be weakenend. For a discussion of the *verba* see Gordon Lathrop, 'The Institution Narrative', in: *New Eucharistic Prayers*, ed. Frank Senn (New York 1987), pp. 139-145.
27. See facsimile in *Johann Sebastian Bach* [see note 8], p. 137.
 28. The tradition of *accompagnato* for recitatives containing the words of Jesus, particularly the Words of Institution, goes back at least to the *Matthäus-Passion* of Johann Sebastiani (1664), ed. by Friedrich Zelle in Vol. 17 of *Denkmäler Deutscher Tonkunst* (Leipzig 1904). The text of *Der Für die Sünde der Welt Gemarterte und Sterbende Jesus* – the so-called 'Brockes Passion' by Barthold H. Brockes (1712) – specified that the Words of Institution, among other sayings of Jesus, should be with *accompagnement*, so settings of that passion by Reinhard Keiser, Georg Philipp Telemann, and Georg Friedrich Händel conventionally followed the directive. See Henning Frederichs, *Das Verhältnis von Text und Musik in den Brockespassionen Keisers, Händels, Telemanns und Matthesons* (München 1975), p. 94.
 29. See note 20. In the sacramental controversies Lutherans had with the Reformed, the key word was always 'ist'. It was pivotal in the Lutheran discussions of, and arguments for real presence.
 30. So Alfred Heuß, *Johann Sebastian Bachs Matthäus-Passion* (Leipzig 1909), p. 65.
 31. Ludwig Prautzsch, 'Die Bedeutung der Instrumente in der Matthäus-Passion von Johann Sebastian Bach', in: *MUK* 44 (1974), p. 210f.
 32. The saying of Jesus could be recalling the eschatology of the earlier gospels, being an anticipation of the last event; so C.K. Barret, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London 1960), p. 365.
 33. Lasset die Welt weinen aus Ungeduld, aus Trotz, aus Hochmuth, aus Heucheley, und fleischlicher Zärtlichkeit. In eure Augen müssen keine andere Thränen, als Thränen der Liebe kommen.

Johann Jacob Rambach, *Betrachtung der Thränen und Seufzer Jesu Christi* (Halle 1731), p. 12. This publication postdates Bach's *Matthäus-Passion*. For a discussion of tears and the passion of Christ see Elke Axmacher, "Aus Liebe will mein Heyland sterben". *Untersuchungen zum Wandel des Passionsverständnisses im frühen 18. Jahrhundert* (Neuhausen/ Stuttgart 1984), pp. 129-132.
 34. No doubt this is due to the difference between the Gospel accounts and the conflated form of the *verba*. The lyrical forms of the Words of Institution persists in the *Matthäus-Passion* of Johann Kühnhausen, Johann Sebastiani, Johann Theile, Reinhard Keiser, and Georg Friedrich Händel. The influence, in fact, might be just the reverse. Hans J. Moser describes opera-like tunes for the *verba* which were composed by late eighteenth-century composers such as Friedrich Muck (1796), Friedrich W. Berner (1811), and others: *Die Evangelische Kirchenmusik in Deutschland* (Berlin 1957), p. 233.
 35. *Unser Herr Jesus Christus*, a motet a 8, based on the Deutsche Messe formulary tone in *Der Altargesang*, Vol. 1/2 of *Handbuch der deutschen evangelischen Kirchenmusik* [cf. note 6], pp. 358ff. Settings of the Words of institution were

- employed in three different ways in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries: a) Words of Jesus as part of an oratorio passion; b) as part of a musical setting of the Catechism, e.g. those of Matthäus Le Maistre or Johann Kugelman; c) as a motet meant to be sung in place of, during, or after the pastor's recitation of the verba during the liturgy.
36. Der Altargesang I/1, pp. 315, 317, and 320.
 37. Friedrich Smend, 'Die Tonartenordnung in Bachs Matthäus-Passion', in: *Bach-Studien*, ed. Christoph Wolff (Kassel 1969), p. 85ff.
 38. Renate Steiger, "'O schöne Zeit! O Abendstunde!'" Affekt und Symbol in J.S. Bachs Matthäus-Passion', in: *MUK* 46 (1976), pp. 1-13.
 39. Eric Chafe, 'J.S. Bach's St. Matthew Passion: Aspects of Planning, Structure, and Chronology', in: *JAMS* 35 (1982), pp. 49-114. See also his *Tonal Allegory in the Vocal Music of J.S. Bach* (Berkeley 1991), pp. 391-423.
 40. Martin Petzoldt, 'Zur Theologie der Matthäus-Passion', in: *Johann Sebastian Bach* [see note 8], p. 62.
 41. Smend, p. 85.
 42. Chafe, *Tonal Allegory*, p. 396.
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
 44. Pelikan, p. 84.
 45. Friedrich Smend, 'Bachs Matthäus-Passion', in: *Bach-Studien* (Kassel 1969), p. 83.
 46. The contrast between this textual development and Picander's 1725 *Erbauliche Gedancken* is quite stunning. In the latter work, following a shortened version of the Words of Institution Picander inserts an aria which invites grateful ruminations over the gifts of Christ's blood in the sacrament. Then he moves quickly to the Mount of Olives' scene which prompts a soliloquy exploring the pain and struggles of Christ, focussing particularly on the perspiration which falls from his brow to the ground. This is followed by the aria 'Rolle dich nicht auf die Erde, Süßer und doch Schmerzens-Thau!' In terms of space the perspiration has become more important than the bread and wine. Is 'Schmerzens-Thau' a reference to manna? and if so, did Bach press Picander to redirect the imagery to bread and wine, later affirming the sacramental reference by means of Paul Gerhardt's lines 'Milch und süßer Koste'? The text of *Erbauliche Gedancken* can be located in Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach* (Leipzig 1880), Vol. II, pp. 873-881.
 47. Martin Petzoldt has noted the importance of the Shepherd image in passion Christology: *Zur Theologie* [see note 40], p. 68. In a 1715 sermon by August H. Francke, 'Am Char-Freytage über die VII Worte Christi', the preacher considered the seventh and final word of Christ (Father, into your hands I commend my spirit) to be a source of comfort and rejoicing. For believers it meant that Christ through his passion had given the sheep eternal life, and that no one would be able to take them out of his hand. Bach owned a copy of this collection of sermons: August H. Francke, *Kurtze Sonn- und Fest-Tags Predigten* (Halle 1716). The phrase 'Erkenne dich' is reminiscent of an early English seventeenth-century prayer by John Cosin currently used in the 'Burial of the Dead' from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis 1978), p. 211: 'Into your hands, O Merciful Saviour, we commend your servant. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock'.
 48. Stiller, p. 274, note 14.
 49. Robin Leaver, *Bach's Theological Li-*

- brary* (Neuhausen/Stuttgart 1983), pp. 92, 94, 99, 101, 104, 143, 145 and 147.
50. Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, p. 553.
 51. Luther, *Small Catechism*, p. 352,10.
 52. See Pfeiffer, p. 553.
 53. *Ibid.*, pp. 558-560.
 54. *Ibid.*, pp. 559-560.
 55. *Ibid.*, p. 560.
 56. *Ibid.*, p. 571.
 57. *Ibid.*, pp. 589-597.
 58. *Ibid.*, pp. 589-590.
 59. *Ibid.*, pp. 591-592.
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 593.
 61. Axmacher, p. 23.
 62. Petzoldt, *Passionspredigt* [see note 8], p. 11.
 63. Axmacher, pp. 44-45.
 64. Martin Luther, 'Meditation on Christ's Passion', in: *AE* 42, p. 8.
 65. Martin Luther, 'A Treatise on the New Testament, that is, The Holy Mass', in: *AE* 35, p. 84.
 66. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
 67. Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* (St Louis 1962), p. 317.
 68. World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* [Faith and Order papers No. 111] (Geneva 1982), p. 11.